

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

[75] A method of extending the safe shelf life of shell eggs is taught. Eggs are pasteurized by heating eggs until a central portion of the yolks of the eggs is at a temperature between 128° F to 138.5° F That temperature is preferably maintained and controlled for times within parameter line A and parameter line B of FIG. 1 and sufficient that any Salmonella species present in the yolk is sufficiently reduced but insufficient that an albumen functionality of the egg measured in Haugh units is unacceptably affected. The pasteurized eggs are further processed to extend the shelf life of the eggs, and to substantially reduce re-contamination of the eggs. Eggs entering the pasteurization process are initially treated with an anti-bacterial agent. The bath itself is fortified with an anti-bacterial agent of food quality and periodically fortified. Processed eggs are treated with an anti-bacterial agent, and sealed. The sealant material provides a barrier substantially eliminating re-contamination. A safe egg is provided having a shelf life of 6 months or more.

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